provided that if the authoriy concerned is of opinion that such action ought not to have been taken, it may refer the matter to the Visitor whose decision thereon shall be final.

Literacy in Delhi

2456. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in a place like Delhi many children do not receive any formal education and in the age-group 7-14, eighteen (18) per cent cannot read and write and around 42 per cent in the same age-group can only read the alphabets;

(b) if so, why this situation has developed in Delhi when Mumbai (Maharashtra) and Gujarat have better literacy rate; and

(c) what efforts are being made to improve literacy at least in large metropolitan towns as a special drive keeping same focus and all over the country in the foreseeable future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Utilization of Education Cess

2457. SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether 2 per cent education cess charged on every phone bill, credit card bill and on income tax has been put in a good use;

(b) if so, whether Government spent Rs. 9,988.57 crore in programmes of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in 2005-06;

(c) to what extent, it is more as compared to funds spent in 2004-05; and

(d) whether States also released their share timely together with opening balance on April 1, 2005 and the SSA had Rs. 11489.78 crore in store to spend?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) A two percent Education Cess was imposed through the Finance (No.2) Act 2004 on income tax, excise duty, customs duty and service tax to finance Government's commitment to quality basic education. The proceeds of Education Cess are utilized exclusively for the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and Mid-Day Meal Scheme of the Government.

(b) to (d) During the year 2005-06, an amount of Rs. 9993.35 crore was the expenditure under SSA by the States/UTs, which included the contribution of the States also. The expenditure in 2005-06 was considerably higher than the expenditure of Rs. 6598.39 crore in 2004-05. During the year 2005-06, States/UTs contributed Rs. 2727.31 crore as their share. The total unspent balance with the States/UTs at the end of 2005-06 was Rs. 2936 crore. The outlay for 2006-07 is Rs. 11,000 crore.

Modification of definition of literacy

2458. SHRI C. PERUMAL: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to modify the definition of literacy according to international standards;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The National Literacy Mission has defined the desired level of competencies in respect of reading, writing and numeracy, which is required for a person to be literate. As these competencies have been found to be adequate, there is no proposal to revise the same.